



### Life Course

Negative Outcome

### Brief Name

Illegal Drug Usage in Teens

### Indicator

Percent of 12 to 17 year olds who used any illegal drug within the past month.

### Description

This metric includes marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, and methamphetamines, along with the non-medical usage of prescription pharmaceuticals, such as pain relievers, stimulants, sedatives, or tranquilizers. This metric does not include over-the-counter drugs.

WI	US	Best	Worst
9.34%	9.18%	6.31%	14.58%
		IA	CO

### Year

2013/2014

### Numerator

Number of adolescents who used of any of nine categories of drugs within the past month

### Denominator

Adolescents aged 12 to 17 years old

### Importance

Substance use and mental health issues are often co-occurring as youth who have mental health issues may self-medicate with alcohol and drugs. Between 60% and 90% of youth with substance use issues also have a diagnosable mental health issue (Hawkins, 2009). Youth who use illegal substances are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system. Negative consequences of youth substance use can also include truancy, delinquent behavior, poorer academic outcomes, and ongoing substance abuse and financial instability in adulthood (Cerdá, 2016).

### Limitations

Asking about illicit drug use is a sensitive subject, and particularly in interviewer-based surveys such as the National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), may lead to under reporting.

The NSDUH does not include homeless populations, non-civilians, or those in institutions such as jails or hospitals.

### Source

NSDUH: Comparison of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 Population Percentages. Accessed at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHsaeShortTermCHG2014/NSDUHsaeShortTermCHG2014.htm>.  
Hawkins, Elizabeth H. "A tale of two systems: Co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders treatment for adolescents." Annual review of psychology 60 (2009): 197-227. Cerdá, Magdalena, et al. "Persistent Cannabis Dependence and Alcohol Dependence Represent Risks for Midlife Economic and Social Problems: A Longitudinal Cohort Study." Clinical Psychological Science (2016): 2167702616630958.